inclusion of funds. Along with that, there are lot of waivers, write offs, and selling of valuable land. I don't know whether the hon. Minister can give all those details right now. But specifically speaking about HMT, how much fund the Government is giving; how much land have they allowed and then will there be an accountability because this fund will also go down the drain? Finally, Sir, the ancillary units, which are there in HMT, are all small units which have been developed because of HMT. Now when HMT went into sickness, they are also in trouble. They want that the land should be given on priority at the market value as occupied industrial land. Will the hon. Minister consider that?

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Sir, HMT land in Bangalore has been sold in a transparent manner. Open bid was called. Representatives of banks, representatives of IDBI, representatives of State Government, Chief Secretary, Revenue Secretary, etc., all were there. Money had been deposited by the buyers. After that, there was litigation. So, we are looking into it. As far as ancillary industries are concerned, the Standing Committee should recommend. Once this report comes, we shall speak to the appropriate authority, but there is little chance because land which will be sold, will be given to those persons who has already purchased it, but we may persuade them to give some part of it to the ancillaries.

New airports and training centres in NER

*562. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Planning Commission has approved six new airports in the North Eastern Region including the BTAD area of Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether his Ministry will contemplate policy to set up new institutes or training centres in some unused old airports including Rupsi of Assam on the lines of Pilot Training Centre, Ground Engineering Institute or Air Hostess Training Centre etc.;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The Planning Commission has approved the construction of only one Green-field airport in the North Eastern Region *i.e.* at Pekyong in Sikkim. The proposals for new Greenfield airports near Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh) and at Cheitu (Nagaland) are under examination.

(c) and (d) The development projects in North Eastern States are taken up at the request of and in consultation with North Eastern Council (NEC). There is no proposal from NEC for the establishment of Pilot Training Institute etc. at Rupsi.

The guidelines for setting up Pilot Training Institutes and Aircraft Maintenance Engineering Training Institutes have already been laid down by the Government.

(e) Does not arise.

SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Sir, connectivity has been a major problem in the North-Eastern region. Many times, the Civil Aviation Ministry has assured the people of North-East that connectivity will be improved and priority will be given to set up new airports. In his reply, the hon. Minister has clarified that only one Green-field project has been approved by the Planning Commission in the North-Eastern region. But, in the district from which I come, the Bodoland Territorial District area in Assam, there is a hue and cry that a new airport will be set up and for that purpose, land acquisition is also going on. Thousands of people are going to be evicted. There is a major problem now. We know that six airports have been approved by the NEC. I have come to know that the Planning Commission has also agreed, in principle, to set up six new airports in the North-Eastern region. But, I do not know the reason...

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your question? Please, put your question.

SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether these six new airports are really going to be set up or not. And, if such proposal comes to the Ministry, what will be the response of the Ministry?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon. Member has some factual data which is not in accordance with what I have got. The Planning Commission has only approved one Green-field airport, and two airports — one at Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh and the other at Cheitu in Nagaland — are under examination. The one that has been approved is a Pekyong in Sikkim. So, I do not know that six new airports, which he has mentioned, are at which stage. But, I can assure the hon. Member that as far as airports are concerned, there are 22 operational airports already in the North-East, and if we include Bagdogra, it comes to 23, and if these three airports, one-plus-two are approved, it will take the number to almost 26 airports. I think it is a vast territory in terms of what airport you are mentioning. I do not think the North-Eastern Council or the Planning Commission has yet given any approval for any airport, or any proposal for new airport is under consideration, as hon. Member has mentioned. As far as the Ministry is concerned, I can assure you that we are completely in agreement that the connectivity of the North-Eastern region should be maintained at the highest level. That is why, for all these airports, even though there has been a recurring annual loss, the Airports Authority has never shied away from either meeting this expenditure or spending large capital expenditure for upgrading and developing all these airports in the North-Eastern region.

SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Sir, second part of my question was regarding the revival of Rupsi Airport. On 16th October, 2006, the hon. Minister had made it clear that revival of Rupsi Airport was not possible. Now, our concern is that there is international border, Indo-Bangladesh border, and this airport is lying unused and land is being used for wrong purposes. It has become vulnerable to new encroachment in the area. That is why, I was suggesting for setting up new institution. I would like to ask whether in future, the Ministry of Civil Aviation would contemplate any such policy to use Rupsi Airport under the Airports Authority of India to make it operational.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: As of now, Rupsi Airport is abandoned it is virtually misused. It is not in a position, as it stands today, to be revived. However, as I said, we will all take it up with the North-East Council and the Planning Commission and see how we can find a solution.

SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Sir, one-and-a-half year back, we had a long meeting of the M.Ps from North-East with the Civil Aviation

Minister, wherein we mentioned about the revival of the Rupsi Airport. Sir, if you remember, hon. Minister also agreed, at the time, that he would consider the revival of Rupsi Airport. Sir, Rupsi Airport is one of the oldest airports. It was used during the Second World War also and it has lot of importance because the whole of lower Assam is not connected by air, including Dhubri District, Goalpara District, Barpeta District and particularly the BTAD area. Now, as my colleague has mentioned that there is already a rumour that one airport is going to be started in BTAD area. If it is true, we welcome this. My question is whether the hon. Minister will consider proper utilization of Rupsi Airport, which is lying unused for a long period of time.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, I just mentioned in reply to the question put by other hon. Member and I repeat the same that the Rupsi Airport, as it stands today, is not operational. It is abandoned airport. There are lot of other difficulties in reviving it; issues of funding etc. are there. we will take up this issue alongwith the hon. Members in the North East Council as well as Planning Commission, and see if there is any way to do it.

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Sir, I think, the hon. Minister is aware that there are proposals from the State Government of Tripura to renovate some of the Airports of the State, particularly, Kamalpur, Kailashahar and Khowai. Will the hon. Minister let the House know as to what is the status of those proposals?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, various State Governments across the country, including Tripura, want more and more airports to be upgraded and operationalised. I would only like to reiterate that as far as the State is concerned, Agartala is very busy and an important airport. We are putting in more and more investments to upgrade the technology so that it becomes all-weather and more and more reliable airport. But in terms of the smaller airports, I think, what is required is the concerted efforts by the State Governments and I would not only talk about Tripura but all the State Governments across the country. Every hon. Member wishes that air connectivity...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: I asked about Kamalpur...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Yes, it is in the middle of the city; you would appreciate that there are some operational difficulties also. But, simultaneously, for the information of all the Members, I would urge them

to take up the matter with the State Governments also to operationalise smaller airports in consultation with the Central Government... (*Interruptions*)...

MS. PROMILA BOHIDAR: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that Jamadarpali Airfield in Sambalpur and Jharsuguda Airfield in Orissa also are going to be upgraded for regular commercial traffic. What are the details of the action plan for developing these airports to meet the traffic demand of this industrially developed area?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, this particular issue does not relate to the question as this is basically for Airports in the North-East. However, with regard to the hon. Member's question about Jharsuguda, there is an old airport that has not been put to use. I am in discussion with the State Government to find out some ways. As I said, most of the Airports need to have some kind of understanding with the State Government. Every airport cannot be developed by the Airports Authority because we will never be earning profits in spite of whatever investments we put in. So, the State Governments are also being requested to look at the old abandoned airports, closed airports, State Government airports so that they could be brought into the mainstream, and we can give connectivity to such smaller places also.

श्री प्यारे लाल खंडेलवाल: धन्यवाद सभापति जी। माननीय सभापति जी, माननीय मंत्री जी ने अपने प्रश्न के उत्तर में कहा है कि योजना आयोग ने पूर्वोत्तर क्षेत्र में केवल एक ग्रीनफील्ड हवाई अड्डे अर्थात् सिक्किम में पाकयोंग के निर्माण का अनुमोदन कर दिया है। मैं यह बताना चाहता हूं कि सिक्किम बिल्कुल सीमावर्ती प्रदेश है और वहां टूरिज्म को बढ़ावा देने का बहुत स्कोप है। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि यह जो सिक्किम का हवाई अड्डा है, जिसका अनुमोदन हो चुका है, मैं दो साल से इस बात को सुन रहा हूं कि वहां हवाई अड्डा बन रहा है....। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि इस हवाई अड्डे के निर्माण के लिए क्या पर्याप्त भूमि मिल चुकी है और क्या वहां निर्माण का कार्य शुरू करने के लिए धन आबंटित कर दिया गया है? अगर सिक्किम हवाई अड्डे को बनाने का अनुमोदन है तो यह कब तक बनकर तैयार हो जाएगा, यह मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं।

श्री प्रफुल्ल पटेल: सभापति महोदय, सिक्किम के हवाई अड्डे को स्वीकृति मिल चुकी है और इसकी फंडिंग के लिए भी हमारी और प्लानिंग कमीशन की बातचीत जारी है। आज शाम को ही इस संबंध में चार बजे योजना आयोग के साथ एक बैठक होनी है जिसमें इस हवाई अड्डे की फंडिंग के बारे में चर्चा होने वाली है। लेकिन मैं आपको इतना आश्वासन जरूर देना चाहता हूं कि

इस हवाई अड्डे की स्वीकृति, इसके लिए भूमि, इसके लिए फंडिंग और इसे बनाने में कोई बाधा आएगी ऐसा मैं नहीं मानता हूं। निश्चित रूप से यह हवाई अड्डा अगले तीन-चार वर्षों में बन जाएगा क्योंकि वहां की भूमि, वहां का भौगोलिक क्षेत्र ऐसा नहीं है कि अन्य क्षेत्रों की तरह उसे एक-दो साल में तैयार किया जा सके क्योंकि वह पहाड़ी एरिया है, लेकिन उसके बावजूद मुझे लगता है कि 2010 तक उस हवाई अड्डे की शुरुआत हो सकती है।

श्री सभापति: क्या आप अपने कार्यकाल में इसे बनवा देंगे?

श्री प्रफुल्ल पटेल: हमारे कार्यकाल को आप कितना समय देते हैं, उस पर निर्भर करता है।

DR. M.S. GILL: Sir, the hon. Minister's answers to this very vital question on the North East are satisfactory and yet, perhaps not so. Sir, everything is related to the State Governments, the Government is doing something. The State Governments have their own limitations in the whole country. They have much more limitations in the North East. The problems of the North East — law and order, tourism, earning, employment and jobs — are related in a major way to aviation. And, whatever the States of that region may do or not do, will the Minister kindly assure the House that he will bend his considerable energies which he applies elsewhere in the country to do something positive in his tenure for the North East?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Dr. Gill is on the Committee of Civil Aviation also and therefore, I can assure him that all the 22 airports in the North East are ultimately in all these States. There are only three States which do not have an airport operational and these are Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Nagaland. In case of all these three airports, as I have said in my answer to the question, Sikkim has been approved and Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland are under examination which will also see the light of the day very soon. So, there is no question of putting the responsibility on the State Government. The Central Government, the Planning Commission the North East Council and the Airports Authority are doing their very best to ensure connectivity to every State. And, I can assure you that there is no endeavour to pass on the buck to the State Government I am only talking of the smaller airports about whch additional requirements are being mentioned from time to time across the country. I was only referring to that.